CITY OF WHITEHORSE

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

2013 – 2017

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Introduction

Councils in Victoria are required by legislation to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) every four years. Whitehorse City Council supports this strategic approach and has developed this plan in accordance with the legislative guidelines.

The Whitehorse Domestic Animal Management Plan is being developed as a fluid document with the introduction of a Domestic Animal Management Plan Advisory Committee (DAMPAC) that has both industry and Community representatives. The committee will monitor previous commitments to animal management and ensure the plan not only reflects current community issues but also enhance responsible pet ownership and the services Council delivers in this area in the future.

The DAMPAC will balance the competing needs of animal owners, the broader community and the animals that share people's lives. Council also recognises the positive health and wellbeing outcomes that arise from pet ownership. The programs and activities set out in the plan have been developed with the aim to encourage more people to enjoy the pleasure derived from animal companionship, within a framework of responsible ownership that are adaptable to community needs and expectations.

Purpose of this Domestic Animal Management Plan

The purpose of the DAMP is to improve animal management in the City of Whitehorse in general. The plan is to develop and implement a range of approaches that will:

- Review Council's animal management services, programs, procedures and policies which include Local Laws and existing orders;
- Encourage responsible pet ownership by educating our community;
- Ensure compliance within the community to legislative expectations and requirements;
- Promoting the benefits to the community that may be gained by owning companion animals;
- Minimise the risk of attacks by dogs;
- Raise the profile and importance of effective animal management;
- Address overpopulation of any unwanted dogs and cats while minimising euthanasia rates; and
- Address domestic animal welfare issues that are specific to the City of Whitehorse community.

Process Applied in Developing this Plan

This plan was developed in consultation with Council officers, key industry and welfare groups, the community and Councillors. During the initial drafting stage, the DAMPAC used the many thoughts and contributions from industry experts, ideas and results from previous plans and community expectations.

The City Of Whitehorse – Demographics and Council Profile

- In 2012, the City of Whitehorse had an estimated residential population of 159,133.
- The City of Whitehorse has a lower proportion of pre-schoolers and higher proportion of people at post retirement age than Greater Melbourne.
- Around 17 per cent of our residents are aged 65 years and over as compared to 13 per cent of Melbourne metropolitan average.
- It is predicted that the number of people aged over 65 will increase by 4693 by 2021 and represent almost 19 per cent of the population.
- Households with children make up 43 per cent of the population of Whitehorse.
- Burwood and Box Hill have a high proportion of 18 to 24 year olds at 20 per cent.
- We are also a culturally diverse community. In the 2011 census it was found that one third of residents were born overseas and one quarter came from a non-English speaking background.
- The top five countries of birth are: China, the United Kingdom, India, Malaysia and Vietnam. Whitehorse experienced a growth of almost double in the number of people born in China from 2006 levels (an increase of 5260 people born there).
- Reflecting this, Mandarin and Cantonese are the most commonly spoken languages other than English at home. This is followed by Greek, Italian and Vietnamese.
- In terms of housing, 31 per cent of households have a mortgage while 24 per cent of households rent.
- Whitehorse has a high percentage of staff who live locally with approximately 44 per cent of the Council workforce (494 staff members) living in the municipality.

Strategic Directions for Domestic Animal Management

This section sets out Council's strategic response to each of the matters detailed in the Act as mandatory elements.

This plan builds on previous Domestic Animal Management Plans and accepts the importance of dogs and cats to many residents and families throughout the City as well as the social, wellbeing and other related benefits associated with owning a pet and being a responsible pet owner.

A key element of Council's 2013–2017 Domestic Animal Management Plan is the introduction of the DAMPAC. This committee will contribute to the framework for the planning, provisions and evaluations of current and future services and programs provided by the animal management team. The committee has clear and concise terms of reference.

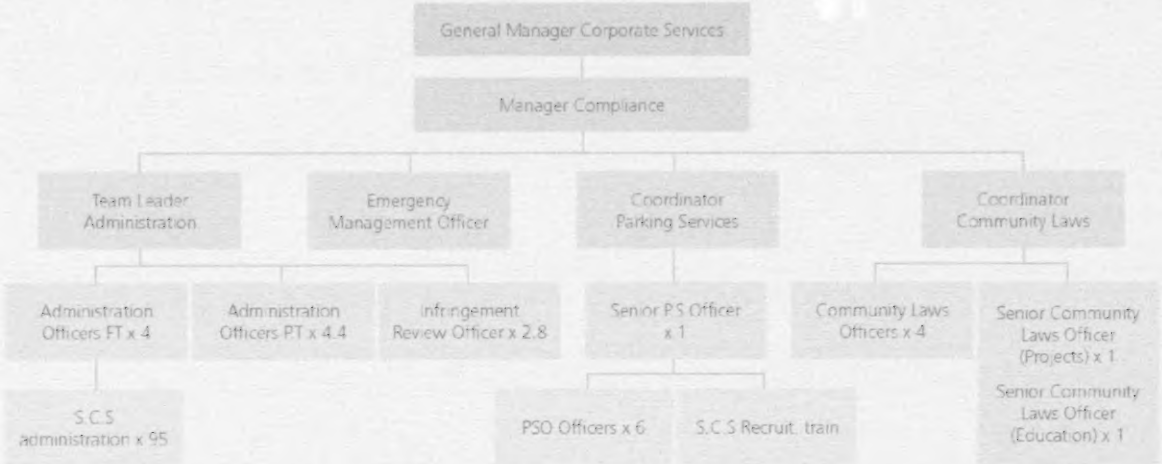
Should funding be required for identified projects, a business case will be developed and promoted to Council for a decision during the development of the annual financial year budget. The DAMPAC Terms of Reference and Membership is attached in Appendix I. Copies of the minutes are available upon request.

Animal Management Staffing and Operational Structure

Animal management functions at the City of Whitehorse are conducted by the Community Laws Unit within the Compliance Department, which has responsibility for many of Council's compliance functions. The organisational structure is shown below.

Animal Management's aim is to provide a dedicated and responsive service which forms part of the Community Laws team responsibilities. The duties include but are not limited to the following:

- Advise pet owners and the wider community on related issues;
- Promote the benefits of dog and cat registration;
- Inspect animal businesses/shelters/pet shops for compliance with relevant codes of practice and registration requirements;
- Manage community attitudes and expectations relating to pets in parks and on trails;
- Manage issues and complaints in relation to domestic animals;
- Apply state government legislation and Council policies in a fair and reasonable manner throughout the community;
- Provide pound services;
- Respond to animal welfare issues;
- Promote to the community the value of being a responsible pet owner.
- Keep a register of all cats and dogs.


General Manager Corporate Services
Manager Compliance
Team Leader Administration
Emergency Management Officer
Coordinator Parking Services
Coordinator Community Laws
Administration Officers FT x 4
Administration Officers PT x 4.4
Infringement Review Officer x 2.8
Senior P.S Officer x 1
Community Laws Officers x 4
Senior Community Laws Officer (Projects) x 1
Senior Community Laws Officer (Education) x 1
S.C.S administration x 95
PSO Officers x 6
S.C.S Recruit. train

Key Achievements From Previous 2008–2010 Plan

- Raised community awareness regarding being a responsible pet owner;
- Improved registration levels of dogs and cats;
- Reduced numbers of dog attacks and dog rushes;
- Promoted the need to have healthy dogs and cats and adequate housing;
- Promoted the need to register not only dogs but cats as well;
- Improved community safety on shared footways particularly in off-lead areas;
- Charged the Education Officer to reduce the impact and stress on the community affected by barking dogs;
- Promoted socialisation and dog obedience training;
- Provided flexible service delivery with a tightly resourced Community Laws Department;
- Comprehensive review of Council orders.
- Reduced the number of pets being impounded; and
- Improved the number of pets being reunited with owners.

Current and ongoing Programs and Services

These services and programs will be developed, monitored, modified and reviewed by DAMPAC in consultation with the Community Laws Department.

Issues may require community education through campaigns to address identified issues.

Current and Planned Training of Authorised Officers

Council is committed to ensuring officers are trained and equipped for the demands of their roles in Animal Management. This training includes:

- Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulations
  - Years 1–4 of plan
- Customer service training
  - Annually
- Conflict management training
  - Annually
- State government training/information seminars/sessions
  - Annually
- Other related training options
  - Annually
- Australian Institute of Animal Management Conference
  - Annually
- Sector innovation/better practice
  - As needed
- Legislative updates
  - As needed

Review Cycle and Date of this Plan

Benchmarking, customer satisfaction surveys, Council standards and DAMPAC feedback will be used to assist in determining the effectiveness of this plan.

The detail of this document will be reviewed in accordance with the terms of reference of the DAMPAC and the Animal Management team every six months.

The state government requires formal reporting on this plan every year. Planning for the next DAMP will begin at the end of year 3 of the current plan.

CURRENT AND ONGOING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Program/Service	Service Level
Domestic animal identification and registration	• Website; • Media releases; • Spring Festival promotion; • Annual registration management; • Reactive enforcement; • *Responsible Pet Ownership* annual brochure; • Mandatory registration of domestic animals prior to release from pound; • Annual registration renewals doorknock.
Domestic animal complaints (Including dangerous dog complaints)	• Extensive operational manual in place that establishes minimum standards and expectations
Routine street and park patrols	• Random patrols of streets and parks are regularly undertaken with extended programmed park patrols
Animal pound facility	• RSPCA are contracted to provide this service and is open to the public every day of the year
Domestic animal business Inspections	• Conducted annually to ensure compliance with relevant codes of practice.
Dangerous, Menacing, Restricted Dog inspections	• Conducted annually to ensure compliance with relevant provisions of the Act; • Programs in place to have dogs with propensity to attack declared
Dogs on/off lead	• Twenty dog off-lead areas established; • Order in place restricting dogs off lead to designated areas; • Dogs to be on a lead in all public areas other than designated off-lead areas; • Dogs to be under effective control at all times.
Prohibited areas	• Order in place restricting dog access to some playgrounds and sporting fields; • Local Law provision prohibits dogs from entering 13 specified wetland areas; • Local Law provision requiring dog owners to remove their animals' faeces deposited in public places.
Other programs, services, strategies	• Range of educational strategies developed and available, including: - Barking dog booklet; - Fact sheets; - Brochures; - Website; - On-site visits; - Park patrols; - Return of lost animals to their owners if they can be identified and are registered; - Advice on responsible pet ownership.
Nuisance issues (barking)	• Local Law standards regarding housing standards and numbers; • Education of the community on the issue of barking dogs; • Highlight key factors that contribute to the dog barking that is causing the problem; • Provide assistance with recordings of barking behaviour; • Education of community to promote responsible pet ownership; • Education Officer available to assist community; • Encourage the use of the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria.
Un-owned cat population	• DAMPAC • Promote state government's Who's for Cats program; • Newspaper articles; • Information sheets.

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CURRENT AND ONGOING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Program/Service	Service Level
Off-lead Areas	• DAMPAC • Signage development and in place • Programmed park patrols • Pop-up inspection • Promotion of registration – renewals, newsletters and newspaper articles • Spring Festival
Nuisance cats and dogs	• DAMPAC • Newsletter • Website • Information sheet – letters to owners • Investigation procedure

DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS AND DATA 2013/14

Key Statistics	
Dog population as at 1 July 2014:	12,442
Cat population as at 1 July 2014:	5718
Registered Domestic Animal Businesses	9

Other Matters	City of Whitehorse 12/13yr	Like Councils (av.) 06/07yr
No. of EFT Animal Management Officers	5	3.1
Hours training per year	38	90
No. of declared dogs (3 dangerous, 2 restricted)	5	33
No. of dog attack prosecutions completed 12/13	6	15
No. of successful dog attack prosecutions 12/13	6	15
No. of impoundments (dogs)	238	738
% of impounded dogs returned to owner	87%	60%
% of dogs rehoused	8%	18%
% of dogs euthanised	5%	22%
No. of impoundments (cats)	122	549
% of cats returned to owner	7%	5%
% of cats rehoused	37%	16.5%
% of cats euthanised	56%	78.5%

General Statistics	
Average no. of complaints received per year	11,091
No. of animal complaints per officer	372
No. of animal businesses inspected per year	8
No. of animals reported to Council as lost or found	511
No. of calls received 12/13	28,782
Correspondence received 12/13	12,683

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN KRAS AND TIMELINES

Activity	Schedule
Education and Training Officers	
Customer service training	Annually
Conflict management training	Annually
DEPI /BAW seminars	As provided
Australian Institute of Animal Management Conference Annually if AIAM Agenda relevant Cert IV Animal Control and Regulations	As identified in PADP
Situation awareness training	Annually
Animal handling training for Officers	Annually
Education/Promotion Activities	
Advertising in local media	March /June/annually
Media releases	As issues arise, and targeted specific issues identified by DAMPAC
Renewal notices	March each year
Reminder text messages/ letters	May each year
Spring Festival	October each year (theme to be decided by DAMPAC)
Responsible Pet Ownership brochure	March each year
Park patrols	- Day light saving hours special weekly patrol - Weekends - Random patrols during working week
Cat awareness program	Breeding season
DAMPAC	Meetings held quarterly
Council website	Keep up to date
Education Officer	Talks to community/ schools as requested
Promotion / education material	Available all year at Council offices
Cat trapping brochure	December 2014
Detailed Education Program	Ongoing – schools, newspapers, special interest groups
Inspections	
Dangerous, Restricted Breed dogs	April
Domestic Animal Businesses	May
Barking Dog	All year
Cat trapping	All year
RSPCA Contract	Monitor monthly
Customer Satisfaction survey	Annually
LGV Survey	Annually
Whitehorse City Council	As required
Reporting	
Registration Rates	Annually
Local Government Victoria	Reports quarterly
Department of Justice	Report every six months
Whitehorse monthly reports	Monthly
Benchmarking	Rehousing rates compared to state average

EDUCATION PROGRAM DAMP

Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Comments
SPRING FESTIVAL	Annual	01/10/14		
Department stand – theme for 2014 – cats	1 day			
Joint venture with RSPCA				
Festival promotion – Council subsidised and RSPCA discounted desexing and microchipping for cats				
Staff attending – answer queries relating to cats				
Showbags – cat related content				
Cat treats – giveaway				
Include – information sheets re curfew, Cats causing Nuisance, unowned cats, cat fencing and containment options, registration form, Responsible Pet Ownership, cat treats, cat welfare information				
Face Painting – free – cat face only				
Colouring in/puzzle activity tables – cat-related theme				
Free first time registration				
Festival promotion to encourage taking ownership of a semi-owned cat being fed				
Posters and display items – cat focused				
PATROLS IN PARKS AND RESERVES	Ongoing	10/11/14		
Programmed – officer and park by zone – weekdays/weekends	Ongoing			
Random – recorded				
Listing parks with specific needs				
Create CSR's for each identified park / reserve				
Focus on identified reserves (incidence of complaints)				
Compare statistics				
POP UP DISPLAY STANDS	Ongoing			Once Approved by DAMPAC
Pop up banner – design and quote • Select topics • Design, key messages • Get quotes				
INFORMATION TALKS	Ongoing			Once Approved by DAMPAC
AMES • Contact AMES , discuss				
Box Hill TAFE • Contact and discuss				
Primary schools • Contact and discuss				

continued...

EDUCATION PROGRAM DAMP

Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Comments
INFORMATION SHEETS	Ongoing			Once approved by DAMPAC
Topics relating to unowned cats, dogs in open space, barking etc				
Cats causing nuisance				
Distribution – Service Centres, vets, community noticeboards.				
Creation of information sheets in other languages				
POSTERS – PARK/RESERVE NOTICEBOARDS	Ongoing			Once approved by DAMPAC
Customised for each park/reserve with map showing nearest off lead parks				
Shared sports reserves – include timetables for organised sports – indicating availability for dog owners				
INTERNET	Ongoing			Once approved by DAMPAC
GIS mapping				
List of off-lead parks				
Pop up banners, description of park				
Council website – info page				
Park websites • Maps to have links to each shared off-lead reserve with current weekly timetable showing the organised events and available times of the ovals to dog owners • Pop ups showing status and conditions of use for on or off lead and prohibited resources / parks / wetlands for cats and dogs • Menu options for off-lead parks, cat and dog prohibited wetlands and parks				
MEDIA NEWSPAPER	As required			Once approved by DAMPAC
Promote responsible pet ownership issues throughout the year				
SURVEY	Ongoing			Once approved by DAMPAC
Articles/ads to announce commencement of after-hours patrols – promote why.				
Residents adjacent to parks and reserves				
Park users				
Hand out at programmed attendances				
RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP COURSE	Ongoing			Once approved by DAMPAC
Implement use as an alternative or additional to a warning or first infringement				

continued...

EDUCATION PROGRAM DAMP

Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Comments
PARK COMMITTEES	Ongoing			Once approved by DAMPAC
Attendance at meetings				
ORGANISED EVENTS	Ongoing			Once approved by DAMPAC
Attendance at organised community events in parks and reserves				
ON HOLD MESSAGES	Seasonal			Once approved by DAMPAC
After-hours patrols commencing				
On and off-lead requirements				
Where to look for further information				
Registration				
Responsible pet manager				
PRIMARY SCHOOLS INFORMATION SHEET	Yearly			Once approved by DAMPAC
For schools to include in newsletter				

Community Local Law 2014

During 2014, Whitehorse City Council undertook an extensive review of its Local Law priorities including those related to the keeping of domestic animals. Community groups, residents and industry groups were invited to comment. A scan of better practice standards by local government was also undertaken.

As a result, Council's Community Local Law 2014 addresses a number of issues including having standards for the housing of domestic animals, the number of domestic animals that can be kept on a residential property, the management of domestic animals focuses and areas where domestic animals are restricted. Following is an extract of the Community Local Law 2014 in relation to the keeping of domestic animals.

PART 5 – KEEPING OF ANIMALS

Permitted animals and birds kept on land

5.1 Except with a permit or in accordance with the following table, a person must not keep or allow to be kept on land occupied by that person any animal or bird.

Type of Animal or Bird Kept on a Property	Small land size*	Any other land size
Poultry but excluding roosters	0	6
Roosters	0	0
Caged birds	5	10
Dogs	1	3
Cats	1	3
Cats and dogs	1	4
Rabbits	1	5
Rodents	2	6
Reptiles	5	5
Racing pigeons	0	40
Farm animals	Only permitted where there is 2000 square metres of open land per animal	
All other animals	0	0

** **small land size** means land of less than 450 square metres.*

Keeping of bees

5.2 The owner or occupier of any land who keeps bees on that land must do so in accordance with the relevant Apiary Code of Practice.

Conditions under which animals and birds are kept

5.3 The owner or occupier of any land where an animal or bird is kept, must maintain any structure used for housing the animal or bird:

(a) in a clean, inoffensive and sanitary condition; and

(b) so as not to cause any nuisance.

Noise and odour

5.4 The owner or occupier of any land on which any animal or bird is kept must not allow any noise or odour that emanates from the animal or bird in a manner that interferes with the reasonable comfort or convenience of any person.

Animal litter

5.5 Whenever an animal is outside the land at which it is normally kept, the person in control of the animal must:

(a) not allow any faeces from the animal to remain on a road, municipal place or land owned or occupied by another person;

(b) carry a litter device and must use it for the purposes of removing any faeces of the animal; and

(c) dispose of any faeces of the animal in a manner which does not cause any nuisance or health hazard to any person or detriment to the environment.

Wandering animals and birds

5.6.1 The owner or person in charge of any animal or bird must:

(a) not allow that animal or bird to wander from where it is normally kept; and

(b) ensure that the land on which the animal or bird is normally kept is adequately fenced to prevent the animal or bird from being at large or escaping.

5.6.2 Subclause 5.6.1(a) does not apply to dogs and cats.

NOTE: Sections 24 and 25 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* provide that an owner of a dog or cat found at large will be guilty of an offence.

Prohibited places for farm animals and dogs

5.7.1 Except with a permit, the owner or person in charge of:

(a) a farm animal must not allow that farm animal to enter any municipal place; and

(b) a dog must not allow that dog to enter any Council building or a wetland identified in Council's *Specified Wetlands Guide* being a document incorporated by reference into this Local Law.

5.7.2 Subclause 5.7.1(b) does not apply to a dog that is:

(a) a guidance assistance animal; or

(b) being used by a government agency.

APPENDIX 1 – WHITEHORSE CITY COUNCIL

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2012

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2012 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

Purpose of the Committee:

The Domestic Animal Management Plan Advisory Committee (DAMPAC) may provide guidance on:

- forums for improved domestic animal partnerships;
- a common understanding and shared purpose with regard to domestic animal management processes;
- integrated domestic animal planning in the urban environment through responsible pet ownership and a focus on education;
- domestic animal management initiatives; and
- domestic animal better practice;
- mechanisms for Whitehorse City Council to receive advice and work with our community.

The role of the committee:

The DAMPAC is to provide advice to Council on:

- opportunities to promote responsible pet ownership;
- evaluation of activities undertaken;
- sharing knowledge and creating an environment of continuous improvement in the domestic animal urban environment; and
- community education strategies to promote responsible pet ownership.

Membership and Attendance at Meeting:

DAMPAC membership to include representation from the following agencies:

- Two Councillors (one the chair);
- An Executive Officer;
- Four representatives from peak body groups (such as RSPCA, Cat Protection Society, Bicycle Victoria and Australian Veterinary Association);
- Council staff including Community Laws and Arts and Recreation Development;
- Additional members as required (e.g. existing advisory committees or management groups) ; and
- Members must attend one meeting annually

Schedule of Meetings and Administration:

It is proposed that the DAMPAC will meet twice in the first year and then annually as determined by the chair.

Administrative support requirements will be provided by Council staff with correspondence distributed electronically.

DAMPAC members may be required to undertake activities outside scheduled meeting timelines.

DAMPAC members will provide advice on mechanisms for Council to effectively engage and work with the community on domestic animal issues.

Reporting:

The Executive Officer of the DAMPAC will provide an annual report to Council on its activities.

Review of the Operation and Evaluation of Performance:

The requirement for continuation and the operation of the DAMPAC will be reviewed in the fourth year of the Plan. A decision will be made on the appropriateness for continuation in conjunction to outcomes and evaluation.

Term of Appointment

Councillor – annual appointment

All other – life of the plan

Major Themes for Consideration for DAMP 2012–2016

Review of outcomes of 2008 DAMP
Pet registration (increase % levels)
Domestic animal nuisance
Domestic animal businesses
Dog attacks
Declared dogs
Pet overpopulation and high euthanasia rates

CITY OF WHITEHORSE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation, Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners of the land now known as Whitehorse and pays respect to its elders past and present.

CONTACTING COUNCIL

Postal Address:	Whitehorse City Council Locked Bag 2 Nunawading Delivery Centre 3131
Telephone:	9262 6333
Fax:	9262 6490
NRS:	133 677 then quote 9262 6333 (Service for deaf or hearing impaired people)
TIS:	131 450 (Telephone Interpreter Service. Call and ask to be connected to Whitehorse City Council)
Email:	customerservice@whitehorse.vic.gov.au
Website:	www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au
Service Centres:	Whitehorse Civic Centre 379-397 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading 3131
	Box Hill Town Hall Service Centre Box Hill Town Hall 1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill 3128
	Forest Hill Service Centre Shop 275 Forest Hill Chase Shopping Centre Canterbury Road, Forest Hill 3131

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